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american
translators
association

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May 25, 1977

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Admiral Stanfield Turner, Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Translators Association on 14 May 1977 I was instructed to convey to you, in my capacity as President of ATA, the Association's concern over the application of certain CIA policies to the Joint Publications Research Service.

One of our members recently called our attention to the letter of 23 February 1977 from [redacted] Chief of JPRS, addressed to JPRS contractors and informing them that *"consistent with the policy of the CIA, JPRS cannot enter into any paid or contractual relationship with any full-time or part-time news correspondent . . . or with any American clergyman or missionary."* Apparently this policy is to be applied retroactively since [redacted] informs the recipients that JPRS *"will be required to terminate (the) contract with anyone who falls within the categories cited above."*

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The JPRS is the largest single source of translation work in the United States, and many members of the ATA depend upon JPRS contracts for all or most of their income. The Association is understandably concerned about a policy that appears on the face of it to discriminate needlessly against certain categories of translators.

In view of the bad press the CIA has received in the wake of the Watergate affair such a policy appears wise and completely justified when applied to any covert work of the CIA, perhaps even to the Agency as a whole. Indeed, the ATA's code of ethics enjoins translators from accepting any assignment they have reason to believe may be used for illegal or immoral purposes. To the best of our knowledge, however, and according to public statements the JPRS is not involved with translation of classified materials, and its affiliation with the CIA is alleged to be administrative and financial only.

Admiral Stanfield Turner

May 25, 1977

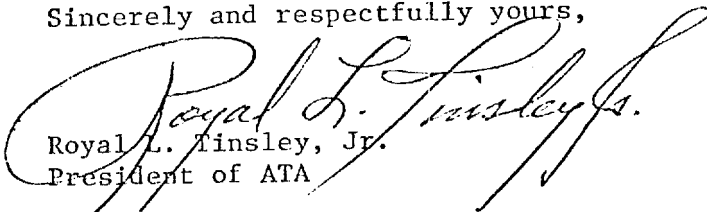
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If this is a correct description of the situation, then the ATA perceives the application of this policy with respect to the JPRS as unjustifiably discriminatory and detrimental to the interests of the translating profession. We believe the objections are clearly and fairly expressed by ATA member Theodore E. Morrow in his letter of 7 March 1977 to [redacted] STAT of the JPRS, a copy of which is enclosed. We agree with Mr. Morrow that if CIA policies must be applied to the JPRS simply because of its administrative and financial relationship with the CIA, then the JPRS should be placed under the jurisdiction of some other government agency or office.

In view of the great importance of the JPRS to so many of our members the Association desires amicable relations with the JPRS, and we have no desire to harass the CIA in its difficult and critical task of safeguarding the security of the nation. Nevertheless, we have an obligation to the translating profession to do what we can to correct this situation. On or about the second of May I called [redacted] to inform him that ATA felt it must protest this policy and to give him an opportunity to write some kind of explanation to be printed alongside any Association statement in the ATA Chronicle. [redacted] told me the policy was under review and suggested that any statement at that time might be premature. I reported this conversation to the ATA Board of Directors and they agreed that any public reaction to the policy might be premature. They felt, however, that as President I should represent the Association's concern to you in the hope that the policy review might result in a decision to rescind the policy with respect to the JPRS. STAT

In the event these policy restrictions continue to apply to JPRS contractors the Association will have no alternative other than to call them to the attention of our entire membership and ask the members to write to their representatives in the House and Senate, requesting congressional action to redress what we see as unjustifiable restrictions on their right to earn a living working for the JPRS. We sincerely hope, however, that the review of this policy by the CIA will result in the CIA itself removing these restrictions.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,


Royal L. Tinsley, Jr.
President of ATA

xc: [redacted]

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